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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Road to Reconciliation

A reintegrated former insurgent commander is working with the local government in Hirat Province to help local residents



Photo: USAID/LGCD

Community members contributed labor and land for repairing the Qazzaq Road.

Road improvements in Pashtun Zarghun District demonstrate the government's commitment to work with reintegrated insurgent leaders, paving the way for better relations with vulnerable and stabilizing communities.

Following the defeat of a local Taliban Commander, former anti-government elements across Hirat Province are laying down arms and reintegrating into their communities. Several of these reintegrees have retained leadership roles under the auspice of their new pro-government stance. In order to insulate these areas against further influence from the remaining anti-government elements, the Afghan Government is building relationships with its former enemies, demonstrating the government's ability to respond to their community's needs.

In Qazzaq Village, Pashtun Zarghun District, the Hirat Department for Rural Rehabilitation and Development and District Development Assembly worked with the Community Development Council, currently headed by a former insurgent, to develop a road rehabilitation project. Funded by a USAID community stabilization grant, the project repaired and widened the main road between Qazzaq and the district center. The project also repaired the 2.5 km road linking Qazzaq to other villages in the district. The community provided all of the skilled labor and went beyond their original commitment by purchasing and donating the land required to widen the road. The improvements have eased travel for this agrarian area, increased access to government services, and enabled farmers to transport their produce to markets. The grant also provided additional economic benefit of 1,289 person days of short term employment.

Identified by the local Community Development Council and planned in coordination with the Afghan Government, the Qazzaq Village road project is visible evidence of the government's presence in the area. By working directly with the head of the Community Development Council, the Afghan Government has demonstrated its commitment to work with former insurgents, paving the way for better relations with vulnerable and stabilizing communities.

As USAID's flagship stabilization effort, the Local Governance and Community Development project works throughout Afghanistan to improve stability by connecting local populations with local government bodies and supporting those departments to respond to community needs and grievances.